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ABSTRACT

This document presents a proposal for a two-tiered community service and youth employment program. The first chapter presents youth employment data, describes the need for a work-education and community investment strategy, and discusses the proposal's underlying philosophical and economic ideas. Chapter II reviews four categories of successful work and service programs that provide examples for developing policy: (1) work experience and cooperative education; (2) remedial education and training; (3) pre-employment assistance; and (4) private sector placement activities. Chapter III presents a model of the two tiers of the proposed project, each of which would serve different goals: (1) the Community Service Corps would involve young adults who want to spend a year in transitional community service that tests their skills and encourages them to explore new interests; and (2) the Stay-in-School Program would offer training, support services and work opportunities to economically disadvantaged youths who are still in high school or have dropped out. Chapter IV briefly outlines the general principles upon which this model's delivery system options were based. The document ends with a short discussion of principles for a national community service and youth employment policy, and with a list of organizational and individual endorsements. (KH)

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A Policy Blueprint For Community Service And Youth Employment

Prepared by
The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project
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and
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With a Foreword by
Leslie W. Dunbar
and
Christopher duPont Roosevelt

September 1984

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Eleanor Roosevelt had a strong sense of public service. She will always be remembered as the dynamic First Lady and United Nations' delegate who championed the cause of the underprivileged and the oppressed.

The Institute established in her name has supported programs that address problems of poverty, peace, human rights and the concerns of the elderly and the young. In this centennial period of the celebration of her birth in 1884, the Institute has undertaken a commitment to focus attention on the problems of our nation's young people.

The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project was established by the Institute to increase public understanding of the problems of youth unemployment and the transition of young people from school to work and further education. To this end it has initiated a variety of programs to disseminate information as well as to develop appropriate policy responses.

In addition to support from the Institute itself, the Roosevelt Project has received grants from The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Field Foundation, The Ford Foundation, the Kenworthy-Swift Foundation, and the Public Welfare Foundation. Additional support is anticipated from other philanthropic sources.

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"No greater obligation faces the government than to justify the faith of its young people in the fundamental rightness of our democratic institutions and to preserve their strength, loyalty, and idealism against the time when they must assume the responsibilities of citizenship."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 26, 1936

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". . . I have moments of real terror when I think we may be losing this generation. We have got to bring these young people into the active life of the community and make them feel that they are necessary."

Eleanor Roosevelt, May, 1934

Foreword

The genesis of this project can be traced to a conference that the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute held at Hyde Park in the Spring of 1976. The theme was the need to expand opportunities for our nation's young people to become constructively involved in society. That meeting helped many of us on the Institute's Board realize that, while the post World War II "baby boom" generation was maturing, and the size of our youth population declining, the problems of youth joblessness, especially in our inner cities and depressed rural areas, and their often lack of preparedness to meet every day challenges, were increasing both in magnitude and seeming intractability. We also learned about a wide range of often innovative demonstration programs, both publicly and privately funded, brought about in the 1960's and 1970's to combat these trends, some of which were just beginning to show positive results.

Early during the centennial year of the birth of Franklin Roosevelt in 1982, and as plans were underway for the centennial of Eleanor Roosevelt in 1984, we again focused our attention on the nation's young people. Informal consultations with experts who shared our concern led to the formation of a Steering Committee and the decision to mount a sustained effort that would lead up to and, if need be, go beyond the Eleanor Roosevelt Centennial in 1984. By the early Summer of 1982, the Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project had evolved, with the broad purpose of increasing public understanding of youth development issues. Frank Slobig was brought on to direct it.

As the Project's work grew, we developed our own ideas and convictions about the course the nation should follow. These are embodied in this document. It has had a history which we believe has made it a sounder and deeper proposal.

It arose first of all from intense and long discussion among our staff and Steering Committee, the members of which brought their own varied professional experiences to the debate. But there was more than that. Three briefings, or conferences, were held in Washington, at which representatives of virtually every national group active in the youth service and employment fields participated. One briefing took place in New York City, co-sponsored by the Community Council of Greater New York, the National Child Labor Committee, and the National Youth Employment Coalition, and participated in by groups active in providing service to youth and representatives of the city administration. And a final meeting took place in Atlanta, co-sponsored by the City of Atlanta, the College of Public and Urban Affairs of Georgia State University, the Southern Education Foundation, and the Southern Regional Council, and addressed by Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young.

The result is that this document has not only gone through several drafts, reflecting criticism and suggestions that came from these briefings, but the principles embodied in it have now been endorsed by close to 200 organizations and individuals.

Three themes, or problems, have dominated consideration of national

youth policy: education, jobs, and service. Often one or the other has been emphasized, and its priority insisted upon. The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project believes that a sound national policy must be a bridge that connects these equally legitimate needs of every young person. Our *Blueprint*, therefore, is a bridge emphasizing the creation and expansion of opportunities for young people to be of service to their communities, and through such service, to develop skills and values that would facilitate their transition to adult citizenship.

In developing these plans, we necessarily wrestled with administrative and organizational questions. Consequently, a companion document was developed; titled *Programmatic Options*, it will be published later this year.

We hope that this publication, and the discussions that have preceded and will follow it, provide a contribution to the policy making process and ultimately lead to a significant expansion of opportunities for the nation's young people to participate constructively in their community life, to learn, and to take on the responsibilities of citizenship.

Leslie W. Dunbar
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for the Project Steering Committee
September, 1984

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Summary

The last half of the 1980's poses enormous challenges to both economic and educational policy-makers. Productivity has been decreasing, and American industry is increasingly threatened by competition from abroad. Nearly a fifth of white youths looking for work age 16 to 19 are unable to find jobs, and for black teens the figure hovers at or exceeds 50 percent. More than 800,000 teens are dropping out of high school each year. When those who are enrolled but rarely attend school are included, the number exceeds a million. At the same time, essential community and environmental services have been curtailed because of reduced funding. Moreover, few effective mechanisms exist for developing youth competencies in the community setting, and the concept of community service—long an American tradition—receives little attention. In addition, employers complain that large numbers of young people—even many who graduate from high school—lack the basic literacy and computation skills to perform adequately in the work place, and the cost of on-the-job remediation is often prohibitive.

In response to these challenges, a public commitment of substantial proportions is necessary to create meaningful service and work opportunities for youth. The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project is proposing a nationwide program to serve as a bridge between education and employment in order to help halt the deterioration of our future work force and in the quality of life which our people enjoy. What is being proposed goes beyond ameliorating cyclical youth unemployment, and faces the reality that the problem is profoundly structural and extensive.

In collaboration with a wide range of other public interest groups, the Roosevelt Project will actively seek broad support for this effort. It is a work and service program complemented by and integrated with a significant educational initiative. Drawing on lessons learned from the past, it would not require expensive demonstration projects. Its objectives are:

- to stimulate participation in community service and enhance the effectiveness of civic, voluntary, and community-based organizations;
- to improve the level and quality of local environmental and human services;
- to increase youth employment, especially among minorities and the economically disadvantaged;
- to foster high school completion and further education and training;
- to reverse the economic drain which results from large numbers of youths who may require lifelong taxpayer support.

Based on a public/private partnership at federal, state, and local levels, the proposed model permits maximum flexibility in administration and encourages a large measure of local initiative. It also takes advantage of prior education, training, and employment program experiences which demonstrate that many young people understand the importance of basic skills only when they face

work place challenges. As a result of this exposure, their motivation to learn increases, and through combining education and work, they become happier, more productive and stable members of society.

This *Policy Blueprint* outlines a two-tiered community service and youth employment program that could be built up and phased in over four years and would complement related initiatives already planned and underway. Recommended administrative and organizational specifications are set forth in a companion document, *Programmatic Options for a Nationwide Community Service and Stay-in-School Program.*

The Community Service Corps would be a nationwide program open to high school graduates or holders of the General Educational Development (GED) certificate up to 24 years of age, who want to devote a year to community service, developing their skills and exploring new interests. Enrollment should reflect a balance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged young women and men. The Corps would provide service in nursing homes, senior centers, hospitals, libraries, neighborhoods, wilderness areas and preserves, recreational facilities, day care centers, and schools. Corps members would be paid for their work and would also participate in remediation and other educational activities. An educational trust fund for post-program benefits would be established to encourage further education and training, with contributions by participants and the Corps. Over four years, the Corps could reach a level of a million participants, equivalent to about 25 percent of the out-of-school 16-to-24 year olds who are presently out of work.

The Stay-in-School Program would be an education and employment incentive program for economically disadvantaged, 14-to-21 year old high school youth and dropouts in designated urban and rural poverty areas. It would provide a broad continuum of education and training services, and participation in these activities would be a condition of eligibility for paid work and service opportunities. To the maximum extent possible, it should build upon existing cooperative education, other work/study and vocational education programs, and the summer youth employment program, which should be increasingly viewed as the third semester in the school year. For 14 and 15 year olds, particular emphasis would be placed on reaching drop-out prone young people performing below grade level with remedial education, both during the school year and the summer. It should also be closely integrated with the newly emerging public/private partnerships under the Job Training Partnership Act and with enhanced school-to-work transition services that ought to be part of future educational policy initiatives.

Both the Community Service Corps and the Stay-in-School Program should be implemented through and complemented by existing systems and institutions. Estimated costs of implementation would be $1.7 billion the first year to just under $8 billion by the fourth. Cost/benefit analyses of the Job Corps and value of work output studies of prior work and service projects indicate that the benefits of the proposed model are likely to exceed its total costs. Other studies, such as a recent analysis of the costs of failing to employ jobless young people in New York City, show that the long-term societal and economic costs of youth neglect are staggering. In short, we cannot afford to do nothing.

I. The Need For a Work-Education and Community Investment Strategy

The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project is proposing that our national commitment to young people be enlarged. The United States led the world in establishing free public education. We did that in the last century. Every age has its own challenges, and ours today are to find new and better ways to bring all young people, the poorest and most deprived among them, into productive work and public service.

We live in a country where work and service traditionally are held in high esteem. We often make value judgments about others based on the kind of work they do. It is hard to feel good about yourself if you have nothing productive to do. In recent years, we have not entrusted young people with sufficient responsibility to do things of real value. Their willingness to work and to be of service is nonetheless there, and they need opportunities to make meaningful contributions to society. At the same time, our communities need improved services and our natural resources need to be maintained and protected. An investment and development strategy which takes both of these needs into account should be vigorously pursued. By becoming actively involved in community service and in working toward achievement of society's goals, young people are more likely to make a healthy transition to adulthood. They will also develop an appreciation for education and work, a sense of citizenship, and a commitment to positive personal values. In addition, they will become economic assets rather than economic burdens, as many are now.

The current proportion of idle and aimless youth in our society is unacceptably high. Millions of young Americans are not finding the opportunity to develop the employment skills and work habits necessary for future productivity and to contribute to our nation's economy. Growing numbers of teenagers are reaching adulthood without ever having worked. The costs of this lost output, developmental lag, and human resource waste are enormous.

The following statistics illustrate the magnitude of the problem:

- Nearly 40% of the unemployed, almost 3.5 million people, are under 25 years of age.
- The decline in the number of employed young people as a result of the recent recession has been worse than during any other period since the end of World War II. Between 1979 and 1983, total teen employment dropped by 1.7 million, more than wiping out the gains realized from 1975 to 1979.
- Despite the economic upturn beginning in December, 1982, teenagers, who constitute nearly 20 percent of the unemployed, have been receiving less than 3 percent of all new jobs.
- Nearly 1.5 million 16-to-24 year olds who are looking for work report that they have no previous work experience. Another 1.5 million teenagers

are out of the labor force but say they would like to work.

- An enormous disparity has developed in the last 30 years between the employment status of black and white teenagers. For example, in July, 1984, only 23 out of every 100 black teenagers were working, whereas 49 percent of white teenagers had jobs. The annualized labor force participation rate of black teenagers in 1983 reached an all-time low of 36.4 percent, prompting Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Janet Norwood to refer to the black teenage unemployment situation as one of the most important social problems of the day.

Data from the public education arena are equally bleak. Many young people are questioning the relevance of education, dropping out of school at the rate of 800,000 per year. When those who are enrolled but rarely attend school are included, the number is well over one million. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 28 percent of the nation's ninth graders will drop out of high school before graduation. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's recent report, *High School*, points out that in "1980, 78% of white 19-year-olds in the United States were high school graduates. However, that same year, [only] 61% of black and 56% of Hispanic 19-year-olds held high school diplomas." Further, best estimates are that 56 percent of Hispanic and 44 percent of black teenagers are functionally illiterate. Moreover, employer experience clearly indicates that a high school diploma alone is neither an accurate measure of the individual's basic skills nor a valid predictor of employability. The National Commission on Excellence in Education exclaimed that the "people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skills, literacy and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life."

The problem of youth employment is worse today than in the mid to late 1970's, when many considered it a national tragedy. Young people are unemployed in even greater numbers not because they do not want to work, but primarily for two other reasons. First, there are simply not enough job opportunities, particularly in our inner cities and depressed rural areas where there are large concentrations of minorities and poor people. Second, a basic lack of education and a fundamental unfamiliarity with the world of work, especially among minorities, prevent many young people from entering the labor force. As the following statistics demonstrate, the problem is not simply going to disappear:

- The 16- to 19-year-old population, now 14.7 million, is projected to drop to 13.5 million by 1990, but then begin to rise again.
- According to economic forecasts, the temporary decline in the number of teenagers, independent of other factors, will merely reduce the youth unemployment rate by 2 percentage points.
- The population decline will be largest among whites, thus raising the minority proportion of our future potential young workforce to over 25%.

Numerous studies and demonstration projects have shown clearly that young people, both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged, want to work.

Given the opportunity to do so, they respond positively and show a high degree of motivation. Instead, we now have large numbers of young people who end up drifting on the margins of society, victims of forced idleness, sometimes victimizing others to survive. The choice facing America is to accept the continuing downward spiral of social deterioration, or to make an investment in young people's productive capabilities.

An enormous range of potential opportunities exists for young people to serve society's unmet needs. The following are a sample of relevant examples from studies conducted by the Urban Institute and the American Institutes for Research:

- At least a half million opportunities appropriate for young nonprofessional workers could be created in education and school-related services alone.
- Better care for severely restricted elderly and handicapped individuals could productively occupy another 275,000 youths.
- An estimated 225,000 opportunities exist in energy, environmental protection, and urban and rural conservation areas.
- Social services to children, youth, and families could involve 165,000.
- Criminal justice, corrections, and public safety could employ 200,000.

The opportunities are there. Young people need to be challenged to make an investment in their local communities and in themselves. Our goal should be to launch more young men and women on the path to long-term economic self-sufficiency, thereby avoiding later costs in welfare, institutional care, and incarceration. We should not wait for new revenues which may be generated by industrial and business advances. Rather, we must recognize that our economic system has always achieved its strength through a mix of private and public goods and services and by developing and utilizing the full capacity of its human resources.

II. What We Have Learned

From the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the National Youth Administration (NYA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of the 1930's through the anti-poverty, community development, career education, and youth employment efforts of the 1960's and 1970's, we have learned a great deal about the effectiveness and value of various work and service programs. Using this knowledge, we can move forward without further expensive experimentation. The experiences of alternative youth employment and training programs during the last 20 years, particularly those with linkages to the education system, provide us with valuable insights into what helps improve the qualifications and labor market status of young people, especially the disadvantaged. The period following passage of the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act of 1977 (YEDPA) yields unusually rich data regarding these questions.

Prior programs reflect a range of approaches that fall into four basic categories: work experience and cooperative education; remedial education and training; pre-employment assistance; and private sector placement activities.

Work Experience and Cooperative Education

Since the mid-1960's, the largest, most widely known and sustained youth work experience effort has been the summer employment program. A major annual infusion of federal money has supported the creation of up to 1 million summer jobs per year. During the early years the program was of questionable quality, beneficial for the most part only in keeping young people "off the streets" and in redistributing income. Since the late 1970's, however, where the traditional summer work experience has been expanded to include remedial education and training activities, there has been a distinct benefit to the participants in skill acquisition and long-term employment potential.

The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP), the largest of the YEDPA demonstrations, showed that employment programs conditioned on school attendance and performance can be very effective. In order to secure and keep their jobs, 16- to 19-year-old poor youth in 17 sites across the country were required to remain in or return to school and to maintain satisfactory standards of scholastic performance and attendance. Program results showed that:

- Useful, productive, stimulating work opportunities that meet real community needs can be created on a large-scale, decentralized basis.
- The private sector can play an important role, contributing more than half of the 10,000 worksites and 23 percent of the work hours by the last year of the demonstration.
- Black teens are as eager to work as whites and stay on the job longer.
- The employment rate of disadvantaged young participants increased by 90 percent.
- Total school enrollment and the return-to-school rate of younger dropouts increased significantly.

Other service and work programs targeted to both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged youth have also shown impressive outcomes. The Program for Local Service in Seattle during the early 1970's, the Cooperative Education and Work-Study programs operating since the late 1960's, the Ventures in Community Improvement (VICI) Program in the late 1970's, the California Conservation Corps, and other federal, state, and local conservation programs developed in the late 1970's have shown that:

- The dollar value of the work performed and services provided exceed program costs.
- When work and service opportunities are offered, young people respond with improved school attendance, higher incidence of continuing education to the next level, lower unemployment rates following participation, and greater appreciation for community involvement, public service, conservation, and good government.
- Community service opportunities offered by programs open to all youth attract both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged participants.

Remedial Education and Training

The Job Corps experience over nearly two decades is an excellent source of information about the effectiveness of remedial education coupled with work experience and skill training. Individualized instruction, often computer-assisted, has significantly increased the reading and math competencies of Corps members. Further, participants develop the motivation and discipline necessary to enter the competitive labor market and/or continue their education, and the program has been successful in large part, despite the severe basic skill deficiencies presented by most entrants. However, because Job Corps serves the hardest to serve, it is also considerably more expensive than the model we propose.

Pre-employment Assistance

Various types of pre-employment programs for disadvantaged youth have been put forward in recent years. They aim to provide a minimum set of competencies and coping skills to enable young people to function independently in the labor market. Activities have included basic skills training, counseling, motivational training, occupational information, vocational exploration, and job search assistance. Services have sometimes been offered in a school setting but more often by outside, community-based organizations. One of these programs' most positive attributes is that they expose participants—many for the first time—to adults successfully engaged in productive service and employment.

Private Sector Placement Activities

Historically, the responsiveness of the private sector toward young people served by employment and training programs has been limited, particularly for the disadvantaged and school dropouts. Various tax incentives and subsidy schemes have been tried with only modest success. Some employers have had a negative perception of government-funded programs; many others have partici-

pated in innovative public/private partnerships that have opened new opportunities to disadvantaged youths. Too often, however, the absolute number of young people affected has been small. Moreover, as the Committee on Economic Development points out, programs with successful public/private partnerships "often obtain federal funds and tend to gain in stability and professionalism as a result of skills that the partnership brings together. In this way business firms contribute to activities that they might not undertake or sustain by themselves."

What will happen under the Job Training Partnership Act remains to be fully seen. Clearly, placement in a regular private sector job is a desired objective, and subsidized try-out employment and vocational exploration in the private sector should be encouraged. However, JTPA represents both a sharp reduction in resources from the past and severe limitations on the uses of funds for work experience and financial assistance to enable the most needy to participate. Early evaluations of JTPA indicate that few of those most in need will be served. Further, a year-round approach to youth joblessness is sorely lacking. In the absence of adequate unsubsidized employment opportunities in the private sector, the creation of a substantial number of subsidized work and service opportunities for young people is preferable to socially costly idleness and aimlessness.

III. A Program To Bridge the Gap Between Education and Employment

In recent years, public debate regarding unemployed youth has focused on two primary concerns: economic policy and educational policy. Each policy has advocates from all points in the political spectrum. Many of those concerned with economic policy predict that, given a continuation of current policies and trends, the United States may not produce enough new jobs during the balance of this decade to satisfy normal labor force expansion. America has been facing an ever spiraling increase in the overall unemployment rate which averaged 4.2% in the 1950's, 4.8% in the 1960's, 6.2% in the 1970's, and 8.5% for the first four years of the 1980's. For depressed urban and rural areas and for the youth population, forecasts suggest it will remain at or exceed record high levels. For many young people, the jobs simply will not be there.

Those concerned with educational policy observe that test scores have fallen, the quality of teachers has allegedly declined, dropout rates continue at high levels, and employers consistently and vociferously complain that young job applicants lack basic reading and computation skills. Other factors, such as the dramatic increase in teenage pregnancy and "runaways", further complicate the tasks of school systems and reduce the potential employability of "high risk" youth.

The continuing debate must recognize the inextricable, functional linkage between economic and educational policies, if effective strategies are to emerge. The education sector is directly affected by perceptions—of students and teachers alike—regarding prospects for and access to jobs and other productive community involvement. The motivation to learn, the motivation to exercise discipline, the motivation to plan for the future and to explore a wide range of options will not exist when many young people perceive that sufficient employment opportunities do not exist. Unless there is a bridge between basic economic policy and educational policy, between the job generation process and our schools, neither will succeed.

A combined employment-education-community service policy can be that bridge. Its goal is to facilitate the transition of adequately prepared young people from school to work, simultaneously improving the quantity and quality of local community services. The two-tiered model proposed here embodies such a comprehensive policy. It builds on existing systems and institutions at local, state, and federal levels and takes advantage of the unique strengths of community-based organizations. It also makes efficient use of guidance derived from the experiences of earlier programs targeted on one or more facets of the problem.

The Model

Community Service Corps

Recognizing both the demand for a wide array of service and development projects in local communities and the eagerness of most young people to be constructively involved in work and service activities, this tier would be a large-scale, gradually phased-in, and decentralized Community Service Corps.

The Corps would incorporate the best elements of past and present conservation corps and community service experiments. To reinforce the importance of educational attainment, it would be open only to all 16-to-24 year olds with a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate, except that up to 10 percent of its enrollees could be drop-out youths who agree to pursue a GED or diploma. The Corps would appeal primarily to those young people who want to spend a year in transitional community service that tests their skills and encourages them to explore new interests. Extensions of service beyond one year could also be available. Corps members would be involved in community service, development, and conservation projects that would be concentrated primarily in low-income urban and rural communities and in the nation's preserves and wilderness areas. The Corps would maintain a balanced enrollment of 50 percent non-disadvantaged and 50 percent economically disadvantaged young people, and equal numbers of young women and men. The Corps must be planned and implemented in ways that introduce participants of both sexes and all ethnic and socio-economic groups to the full range of service opportunities in both traditional and non-traditional areas. Further, job restructuring efforts would also be undertaken to assure the availability of jobs for disabled young people.

Corps members would be paid the minimum wage for work and service for four days per week and would spend the fifth day in such activities as remediation, career exposure, and job or educational placement activities, or in volunteer tutoring and other assistance to fellow Corps members. Corps members would also be involved extensively in staffing and administering the Stay-in-School Program. An educational trust fund for post-program educational benefits would also be established, with both participants and the Corps contributing. For those economically disadvantaged participants not inclined to pursue post secondary education, special emphasis would be given to assist them in obtaining subsidized private sector employment or on-the-job training.

Stay-in-School Program

The companion Stay-in-School Program would be targeted solely toward economically disadvantaged youths age 14 to 21 who are still in high school or who have dropped out. Established in the major urban and rural poverty areas in every state, it would offer a broad, year-round continuum of training and support services as well as work and service opportunities. In-school participants would be required to maintain certain school performance and attendance levels, and dropouts would have to return to school or enroll in an alternative educational program to prepare for the GED exam. Those who complete the Stay-in-School Program might then enroll in the Community Service Corps.

The initial phase of the Stay-in-School Program would focus on the Summer

Jobs Program and combine work with remedial education and employability skills development. The program should be further targeted on those students performing one or more grade levels below average and who are most prone to dropping out of school. In effect, the summer jobs program should be viewed as the third semester in the school year. This summer remediation and work combination would help overcome the educational slippage experienced by the disadvantaged during the summer months and provide encouragement for more learning.

Upon entry, enrollees would go through an assessment process to:

- determine current educational performance levels, and specific areas of deficiency;
- identify career and educational interests and aptitudes;
- establish long-term educational and career goals;
- establish short-term, realistic, measurable objectives; and
- schedule appropriate activities to meet participant needs and objectives.

The service and work opportunities that could be offered would complement and supplement the participant's educational program. They might include:

- subsidized work experience in community-based organizations, public agencies, and the private sector;
- cooperative education and work/study arrangements with particular emphasis on private business and community-based organizations;
- self-paced and computer-assisted basic skills remediation, with personal support as required;
- workshops on study skills, time management skills, communications, coping and survival skills;
- workshops on the world of work, job search techniques, resume writing, filling out job applications, mock job interviews, appropriate attitudes and behavior;
- career exposure and exploration, including short-term internships and field visits to offices, plants, laboratories, and other work settings;
- support services, including personal and family counseling, peer counseling, child care, transportation, interpretation and other support for the disabled, referral to health services as needed, and emergency loans; and/or
- referral to crisis intervention services and residential facilities, as needed, both within and outside the participant's community.

Program enrollees would be paid the minimum wage for their work. Participation in other program activities would be required on an unpaid basis. A limited number of incentives should be provided to reward above-average and outstanding performance in work and non-work situations. Similarly, in work situations, attendance and punctuality requirements would be strictly enforced, pay would be docked, and suspension and terminations would result from repeated violations of clearly explained and understood rules. Enrollees could continue in the program until high school or GED completion.

IV. Administration, Costs and Benefits

The companion document to this *Policy Blueprint, Programmatic Options*, sets forth several delivery system options in detail. The intent here is to provide an overview of the general principles upon which the options were developed.

- The Community Service Corps and the Stay-in-School Program could be implemented through existing systems and institutions and would not require a costly and redundant bureaucracy. Both the JTPA structure and the school system would be expected to play major roles, but not necessarily be the designated administrative entities.
- State and local conservation and service corps programs could serve as the nuclei for further expansion. The JTPA requirement to spend 40 percent of resources on youth provides a substantial existing funding base on which to build.
- Program guidelines proposed would permit maximum flexibility in implementation at state and local levels so that operational program strategies are consistent with local needs and resources. The federal government, however, would be expected to maintain a major leadership role, provide extensive technical assistance, and retain responsibility for program oversight.
- Since work and service opportunities cross traditional departmental and agency lines, program design and delivery in our several proposed options reflect inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation. Examples of sectors which might be involved are education, environment and natural resources, energy, housing, community development, public safety, juvenile justice, health and nutrition services, and child care.
- Emphasis should be given to voluntary and community-based organizations with a demonstrated history of service delivery, development, and conservation effectiveness.
- Special attention should be given to the achievement of a high level of private sector involvement in providing subsidized and non-subsidized work placements.

Fiscal constraints, planning time and administrative needs mandate a phase-in approach and initial program size that would make this initiative doable. While it should be designed to have a substantial impact, it does not purport to be a panacea. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 1983 there was an average of 3.3 million *out-of-school* 16-to-24 year olds who were officially unemployed and an additional 490,000 who wanted work but were no longer looking because they believed that there were no jobs available for them. Together these total 3.8 million young people.

A Community Service Corps building up to a level of one million participants over four years would be equivalent to just over 25% of this universe of need and would represent a substantial impact. Similarly, the Stay-in-School Program could phase up to a level of 400,000 economically disadvantaged young people over the same period and make a significant contribution to increasing the numbers of low income high school graduates. A detailed analysis of cost estimates on a per participant basis is presented in the companion document, *Programmatic Options*. With this phase-in schedule and participant levels, total program costs are estimated at $1.7 billion the first year and nearly $8 billion in the fourth.

Funding should be a combination of federal, state, local and private dollars. Unlike traditional federal-state-local cost sharing approaches, our proposed Community Service Corps and Stay-in-School Program would encourage the use of other existing federal funds as a matching share and would be designed to redirect resources into a more coherent and integrated approach. Sources of funds that could be tapped at the state and local level include: the Job Training Partnership Act, Community Services Block Grant, Community Development Block Grant, Vocational Education (federal and state), Cooperative Education and Work/Study, state and local revenues, and private foundation and corporate contributions. A detailed analysis of cost estimates on a per participant basis is presented in the companion document.

A wide range of cost-benefit analyses and value of work output studies of prior work and service projects suggests that the short and long term returns to society of the proposed model are likely to exceed its total cost. Recent evaluations of the California Conservation Corps show a value of the work and services performed of $1.64 on every dollar invested. Further, cost-benefit evaluations of the state run programs under the Young Adult Conservation Corps show a return of $1.52 for every dollar spent.

Conversely, if a comprehensive youth service and work policy is not initiated, the long term costs to society will continue to mount, further adding to local, state and federal expenditures for welfare and other income transfer payments. In addition, there will be: expansion of the criminal and juvenile justice systems including penal institutions; increased private sector training costs for basic skills remediation; the lost value of badly needed services to the elderly, the disabled, children and families; higher future costs for the reclamation of the environment; and most important, the waste of young lives.

". . . We believe that if our boys and girls on reaching employment age have been unable to get a job in private industry, the government has the duty of furnishing them with the necessary training to equip them for employment."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940

Principles for a National Community Service and Youth Employment Policy

The 1983–84 economic upturn from the deepest and most severe recession since the Great Depression of the 1930's has brought few benefits to our nation's young people. While teens continue to represent nearly 20 percent of the unemployed, they have been receiving fewer than 3 percent of all new jobs. For minority youth, the situation is worse. The annualized labor force participation rates for black and Puerto Rican teens in 1983 declined to the lowest levels ever. Alarming numbers of young people are moving into adulthood without ever having worked. Our nation cannot afford this persistent and ever accumulating waste of human capital, which is the most fundamental resource for our future productivity, security and prosperity. But people who grow into adulthood, systematically excluded from economic participation and meaningful work experience, become more than a tragic waste of resources: they also become a costly burden on the very core and fabric of our society.

Young people are unemployed in even greater numbers not because they do not want to work, but primarily for two major reasons. First, there are simply not enough job opportunities, especially in our inner cities and depressed rural areas, where there are large concentrations of minorities. Second, critical educational deficiencies and a fundamental unfamiliarity with the world of work prevent many young people from entering the labor force. Many are questioning the relevance of education, dropping out of school at the rate of 800,000 per year. In 1980, 78 percent of white 19-year-olds in the United States were high school graduates. However, that same year, only 61 percent of black and 56 percent of Hispanic 19-year-olds held high school diplomas. Moreover, employer experience clearly indicates that a high school diploma alone is neither an accurate measure of the individual's basic skills nor a valid predictor of employability.

We now have alarming numbers of young people who end up drifting on the margins of society, victims of forced idleness, sometimes victimizing others to survive. The choice facing America is to accept the continuing downward spiral of social deterioration, or to make an investment in young people's productive capabilities.

Driven by concerns for ever mounting deficits, Congress and the present Administration have slashed means tested programs for the poor and grants to state and local governments dramatically and disproportionately. Vital community services in day care centers, libraries, senior citizen centers, schools, low income housing weatherization programs, public housing projects, parks and recreation facilities, and food and nutrition programs have been sharply cut. This trend must be halted and reversed.

There is much work to be done. The current employment and training system, in place under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), represents both a sharp reduction in resources from the past and severe limitations on the uses of funds for work experience and financial assistance to enable the most needy

to participate. Early evaluations of JTPA indicate that few of those most in need will be served. Further, a year-round approach to youth joblessness is sorely lacking. A comprehensive community service and youth employment policy must be forged and adopted. The features of such a policy should include:

- A significant expansion of resources available at the secondary school level for basic education and remediation to reverse patterns of functional illiteracy and reduce drop-out rates. Provisions should also be made for alternative education programs operated by community-based and voluntary organizations.
- Institutionalizing school-to-work transition services at the secondary and post secondary levels, including counseling, career exploration and planning, job search assistance and other services that will both facilitate entry into the labor market and instill the importance of further education and training, especially for the non-college bound.
- After-school job opportunities and full-time summer jobs at the minimum wage, coupled with remediation, for economically disadvantaged young people who are in high school or who agree to return to an education program that leads to a diploma or an equivalency certificate. Educational performance and school attendance would be a condition of participation and would be strictly monitored. Special attention must be given to providing work opportunities in the private sector to enhance the value and credibility of the experience.
- Creation of work and service opportunities for 16-to-24 year olds who have completed high school or an equivalency program and want to devote a year to community service, developing and testing their skills and exploring new interests. Fifty percent of the participants would be economically disadvantaged and 50 percent would not be. Further, an educational trust fund would be created to which both participants and the program would contribute for the provision of post-program education benefits. Such a fund would further reinforce the importance of educational attainment.
- Recognition that there is an enormous need for federal leadership and oversight, and that partnerships that espouse a government role, but lack significant financial and non-financial resources, are hollow. Nonetheless, programs should continue to be operated at the state and local level by people who most understand local needs, and public/private, school-business-labor-civic-governmental partnerships should be encouraged.

The often proclaimed goal of a "job for every American who is able to work" could and should become a reality. For young people, many of whom need extra help to become fully productive participants in our economy, we must take extra steps and make solid investments in their and our future. We cannot simply offer vague platitudes that take us back to a seemingly simpler time of "hard work and meager opportunities."

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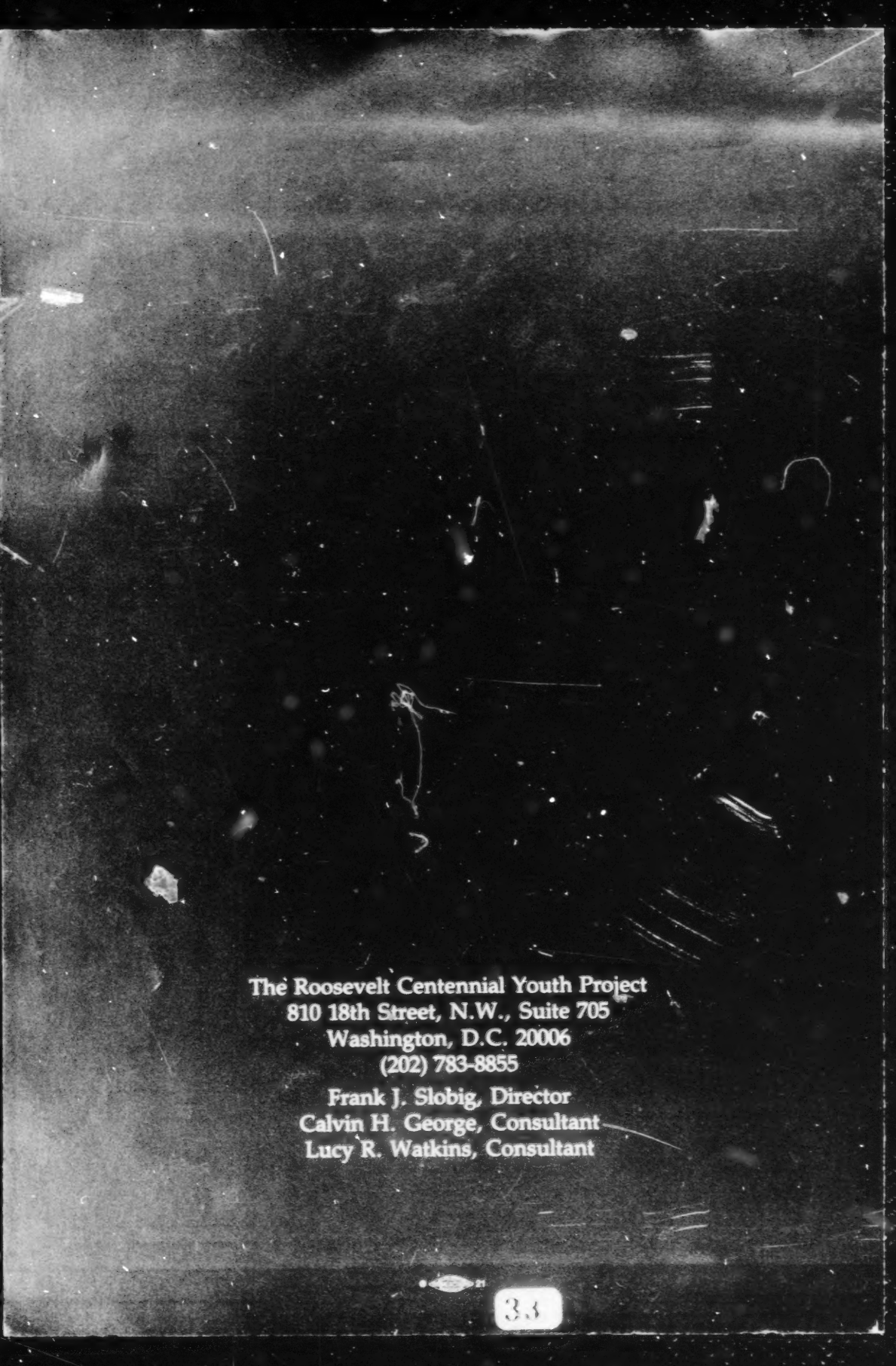
". . . A civilization which does not provide young people with a way to earn a living is pretty poor."

Eleanor Roosevelt, December 3, 1934



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